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Letter dated 9 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you that the acts of piracy committed by the United States naval forces on station in the Arabian Gulf and their searches of vessels carrying goods of a humanitarian nature to Iraq, including goods being imported under the memorandum of understanding of 20 May 1996 and the oil-for-food programme, are still continuing. They are intercepting vessels, detaining them for several days at a time and tampering with their cargoes. Their crews are not allowed to communicate with their authorities or to protest against the actions of the American marines who carry out the searches. On 2 July 2001 United States naval forces halted the vessel MV *Man*, carrying 13,125 tons of refined sugar, searched it and refused to allow it to proceed to an Iraqi port to unload its cargo on the pretext that the sacks of sugar were stowed in such a way as to prevent United States personnel from moving freely between its holds.

These United States forces, which are based in the Arabian Gulf against the wishes of the peoples of the region, are committing unwarranted acts of provocation against vessels carrying civilian merchandise. This requires that you should intervene with the Government of the United States of America with a view to inducing it to instruct its forces to desist from such illegal actions and practices and from obstructing the movement of vessels carrying civilian goods either by intercepting them or by maintaining inspection points. These hostile and illegal actions are impeding the delivery to Iraq of items of a humanitarian nature, thus exacerbating the suffering of the Iraqi people, and are obstructing civilian trade in the Arabian Gulf.

The acts of aggression and piracy committed by the United States naval forces that are based in the Arabian Gulf against the wishes of the peoples of the region and their interceptions of civilian vessels are a manifestation of power politics and pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. They are in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the principles of the freedom of the seas and freedom to engage in trade. I affirm in this connection Iraq's legally established right, in accordance with the principle of State responsibility, to seek compensation for the damage being done to it by these acts of aggression.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Al-Douri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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